1: Ray E-5 (1928-38) 1939 Plateau

It was mentioned above that in the Canadian Plateau the girl interminably plucks needles, one at a time, from conifer boughs. Far to the south, the Mohave girl "goes about plucking leaves from arrowweed brush—a perfectly useless labor—merely because she would forever be lazy if she remained sitting in the house."[113] Related practices are found in California.

The scratcher, either stick or comb, appears to be present throughout the Plateau except with the Coeur d'Alêne, Umatilla, and perhaps the Nez Percé and Wishram. The drinking tube is much less common, being used only by the Klikitat, Southern Okanogan, Sanpoil, Lillooet, Shuswap, Chilcotin, Kutenai, and Flathead (uncertain: Nez Percé, Wishram).

DISPOSAL OF THE DEAD

Clear-cut distributional differences are found in the Plateau with respect to disposal of the dead. The forms are numerous: inhumation; cremation; disposition in boxes, in baskets, on elevated platforms, in trees, in small elevated houses. Cremation occurs in the extreme north and south. Among the Carrier and the Klamath it is the exclusive form, except that Carrier children are sometimes buried in baskets. The Chilcotin, Shuswap, and Thompson practice cremation under certain circumstances, and the Coeur d'Alêne very rarely. Tree burial is utilized for permanent disposal by the Lower Thompson; for temporary disposal by the Tenino, Umatilla, Southern Okanogan, and Lillooet. The Lower Thompson also employ boxes and small houses as containers for the corpse. These are always elevated, sometimes in trees, sometimes on a platform. House burial reappears among the Wishram but in this case without elevation. Basket burial is employed by the Lillooet. Among the other Plateau tribes inhumation is practiced exclusively.

Talus slopes and gravel banks provide the most common sites for burial in the southern Plateau. River banks and islands are frequently used. Quite to the contrary, the Canadian Salish almost invariably sink their graves in soil, preferably loose or sandy soil. There is little consistency in location relative to the village: the Tenino, Klikitat, Lillooet, and Chilcotin prefer sites some distance removed. The Flathead invariably select a spot that is obscure and thus not easily found by enemies who might disinter and rifle the remains. If no such location

[113] Kroeber, *Handbook*, p. 748.

1: Ray E-5 (1928-38) 1939 Plateau

764 is available, horses are tethered on top of the fresh grave to eradicate all indications of the burial. Grave markers naturally are not used by them. In other parts of the southern Plateau, erect sticks or simple posts are used to indicate the location. The Umatilla do not follow this prac-

102
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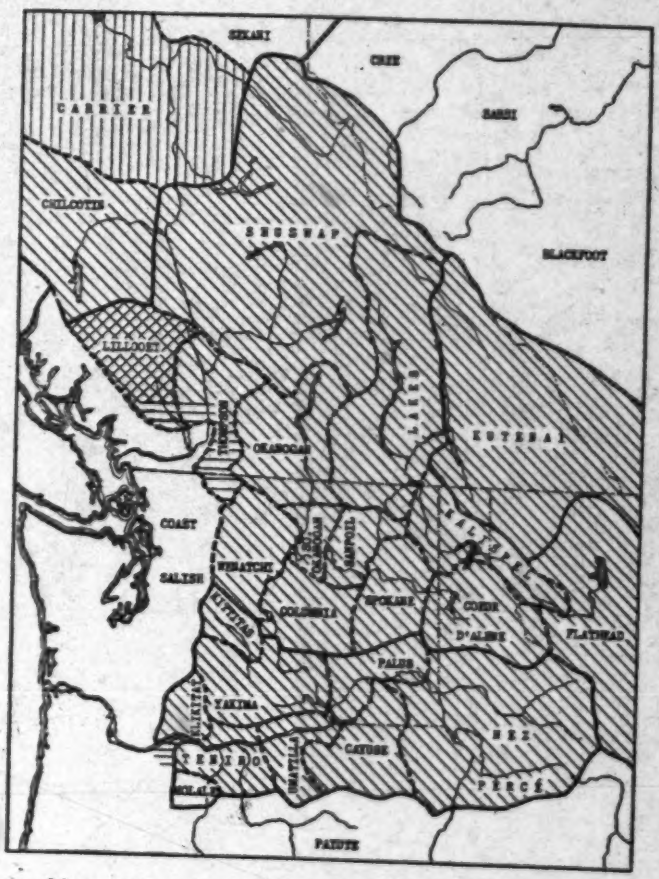

MAP 6. Disposal of the dead: dominant forms. *Vertical hatching:* cremation; *cross hatching:* basket burial and inhumation; *horizontal hatching:* box or house burial; *diagonal hatching:* inhumation.

764 tice but use a large rock instead. The Kutenai place a pole on the ground on each side of the mound left after filling the grave. In other parts of the Canadian Plateau more elaborate grave markers are used.

Over most graves [of the Upper Thompson] were erected conical huts

1: Ray E-5 (1928-38) 1939 Plateau

made of poles covered with bark or with fir-branches. Others, those belonging to the richer people, had conical tents made of skins or mats put over them. Poles were also erected at many graves, and on these were suspended many of the articles belonging to the dead person. The poles always had the bark peeled off, and were painted. . . . On many graves, particularly in the country near Lytton, the canoe of the deceased was placed bottom side up. On some graves were wooden figures almost life size, carved as nearly as possible in the likeness of the deceased person, whether man or woman. The Indians say that a long time ago grave figures were not used by the Upper Thompsons, and that this custom was borrowed from the lower division,[114]

764

[532]

which in turn, it may be added, received it from the people of the lower Fraser River. The Shuswap use shelters similar to those described, but do not place canoes or carved posts on graves. The Upper Lillooet build a framework of four poles from which are suspended the belongings of the deceased.

In general very little attention is given to lining the grave, although poles or bark may sometimes be used for the purpose. Of the Flathead, however, Turney-High writes,

> They say the oldest method was to prepare a floor of flat stone slabs when these could be had. A wall of such stones was then built up higher than the depth of the corpse. A houselike structure was then prepared to protect his head and feet. Saplings were laid over this stone structure and a parfleche stretched over them before the grave was filled in.[115]

Alternative, simpler methods are also described.

The grave is prepared for flexed or extended burial according to usage. In the north central Plateau (Lillooet, Shuswap, Upper Thompson, Southern Okanogan, Sanpoil, Kalispel, and Coeur d'Alêne) the body is invariably flexed but in all other parts of the area the extended position is found.

Although cremation is the universal practice of the Carrier, and perhaps the Sekani, Morice interprets it as a recent importation from the Coast. The original custom of the Athabascans, he asserts,

> seems to have been to enclose the bodies within rough cratings made of small logs crossed at the ends, which were raised from three to seven feet above the ground on stout poles or posts, much after the manner of the scaffoldings whereon they cache their provisions and other household impedimenta. . . .

[417]

[114] Teit, *Thompson Indians*, p. 329.
[115] Turney-High, *Flathead Indians*, p. 142.

1: Ray E-5 (1928-38) 1939 Plateau

764

[The Sekani] occasionally concealed the remains of their dear ones within trees hollowed out for the purpose. Simple plebians, or people who enjoyed no special consideration, were simply left where they died, their fellows immediately lowering on their scarcely-cold bodies the shelters they had lived in, and moving on in their incessant peregrinations after game. In no case was cremation resorted to. But the Babines and Carriers had no sooner come in contact with the Skeena representatives of the Tsimshian stock, among whom the dead were cremated, than forsooth they commenced to burn the remains of those who fell out from among them. They even went so far as to erect as resting places for the small bones that would escape the ravages of the fire, those lofty funeral poles with square ornamented boxes so common along the coast of the northern Pacific. . . . Harmon, one of the first representatives of the Northwest Fur Trading Company in the west, tells us that the influence of the Carriers was leading the Sekanais to burn their dead.[116]

Jenness, in turn, quotes Harmon to the effect that cremation supplanted burial in the ground and adds,

The present-day Sekani have a clear remembrance of cremation, but not of burial in the ground. They assert that they discontinued cremation before the middle of the century, and reverted to an ancient custom, never entirely abandoned, of covering the dead with the brush huts that had sheltered them during their last days and then deserting the locality; but men of influence during that period they deposited in coffins raised on platforms or trees.[117]

It seems probable that the "coffins" referred to by Jenness are the "rough cratings" of Morice. If true boxes were intended, such as those used by the Carrier for bones, it seems certain that they were adopted from the Carrier. Since the latter received them from the Coast at a relatively late time, they surely could not belong to an old culture stratum of Sekani culture. One thing appears certain: the Sekani-Carrier do not practice inhumation and have not for time immemorial. They are thus quite definitely set apart from the peoples to the south in this respect.

Furthermore, cremation is fairly well established as a recent importation from the Coast, the older and typical method of disposal involving felling the hut over the body. The Chilcotin were coming to use cremation more and more up to the time of its abandonment through white influence. This increase was apparently the result of more frequent contact with the Coast. The use of cremation by the Shuswap

[116] Morice, *Canadian Dénés*, p. 199.
[117] Jenness, *Indians of Canada*, p. 382; cf. Jenness, *Sekani Indians*, p. 62.

1: Ray E-5 (1928-38) 1939 Plateau

764

and Thompson is limited to deaths far from home or during warfare. The Thompson cremate less frequently than the Shuswap. This, together with the fact that the Lower Thompson do not cremate, indicates that the custom reached this area from the Chilcotin or more probably the Carrier. This suggests that the practice is of but slight age.

An alternative explanation for the presence of cremation here, and possibly to the north, is that these practices are but the remnants of ancient custom. The nature and distribution of the trait does not favor this interpretation, and it would not deserve a thought except for the archaeological presence of cremation somewhat farther south, and the current practice of the Klamath-Modoc. On the other hand, archaeological evidence within Lower Thompson territory shows inhumation to have been the former practice, although more recently disposal has been above ground. A final answer must wait upon further digging in the Plateau; at present the weight of evidence favors an outside origin for cremation.[118]

Klamath cremation links with that of northeastern California; the nearby Plateau tribes uniformly lack the practice.

The Wishram stand alone in the southern Plateau in their use of burial houses. For the particular type of structure there is no parallel anywhere in the Plateau; the miniature "houses" of the Lower Thompson differ considerably. The Wishram

> burial house was a small rectangular structure of planks set over a shallow pit, measuring about ten feet to the side and six feet high, and with a shed-roof, that is, with but a single pitch. The wall planks were set vertically. . . . "In them the bodies were laid with their heads to the west, sometimes piled up to a depth of three or four feet. Carved wooden images were frequently set up around the vaults, and the planks were often carved and painted to represent men or various animals."[119]

Disposal by the Lower Thompson is predominately in boxes; in fact, the "houses" referred to above are scarcely more than large boxes provided with sloping roofs. All types, large and small, are built up of cedar planks; none are dug out.

The boxes had lids, and were supported by posts, which were also often

[118] Spier and Sapir, *Wishram Ethnography*, p. 271; Teit, *Thompson Indians*, pp. 335 f.; Spier, *Klamath Ethnography*, pp. 71–73.

[119] Spier and Sapir, *loc. cit.*

1: Ray E-5 (1928-38) 1939 Plateau

764

painted and carved. Each box belonged to a family or group of families, and many bodies were placed in the same box. When the boxes were full, a new one was made and placed near by. Some of these boxes had pitched roofs. Poles and grave figures were put up around the boxes. Articles of clothing and other offerings were often attached to these. . . . A few old burial places consisted of a staging erected on poles or posts. The bodies were wrapped in mats of cedar-bark in a sitting position, and deposited in boxes or on the stagings.[120]

There can be no question as to the origin of the disposal practices of the Wishram and Lower Thompson. Both were received from the Coast, one via the Columbia River, the other via the Fraser River. Likewise, the basket burial of the Lillooet is clearly coastal in origin. The large coiled basket merely has been substituted for the box.

[120] Teit, *Thompson Indians*, p. 335.

105

* The table presents traits of social culture typical to the Plateau but not necessarily exclusive to it.

The tribes are listed in approximate geographical order from south to north. The vertical lines mark transitions from one linguistic stock to another. The double lines separate tribes of the Canadian or northern Plateau from those of the American or southern Plateau. The geographical area of the northern part is about equal to that of the southern portion; the latter occupies more space on the chart merely because a larger number of groups is represented.

Breaks in the lines on the chart represent ascertained distributional absence, not merely lack of knowledge, except occasionally for the Wishram and Nez Percé.

Certain traits shown on the maps are utilized here also in order that they may be brought into visual relationship. Also, the table supplements the maps, adding the Klamath, whose extreme southerly habitat is beyond the border of the maps.

The charts are intended primarily as visual aids. Most of the items included are discussed in the text.

5: Bancroft H-4 (no date) 1883 Plateau

765 Grief at the death of a relative is manifested by cutting the hair and smearing the face with black. The women also howl at intervals for a period of weeks or even months; but the men on ordinary occasions rarely make open demonstrations of sorrow, though they sometimes shed tears at the death of a son. Several instances 762 765 of suicide in mourning are recorded; a Walla Walla chieftain caused himself to be buried alive in the grave with the last of his five sons. The death of a wife or daughter is deemed of comparatively little consequence. In case of a tribal disaster, as the death of a prominent chief, or the killing of a band of warriors by a hostile tribe, all indulge in the most frantic demonstrations, tearing the hair, lacerating the flesh with flints, often in- 782 flicting serious injury. The sacrifice of human life, generally that of a slave, was practiced, but apparently no- 765 where as a regular part of the funeral rites. Among the Flatheads the bravest of the men and women ceremonially bewail the loss of a warrior by cutting out pieces of their own flesh and casting them with roots and other [551] articles into the fire. A long time passes before a dead person's name is willingly spoken in the tribe. The 764 corpse is commonly disposed of by wrapping in ordinary clothing and burying in the ground without a coffin. The northern tribes sometimes suspended the body in a canoe from a tree, while those in the south formerly piled their dead in wooden sheds or sepulchres above ground. The Okanagans often bound the body upright to the trunk of a tree. Property was in all cases sacrificed; horses usually, and slaves sometimes, killed on the grave. The more valuable articles of wealth were deposited with the body; the rest suspended on poles over and about the grave or left on the surface of the ground; always previously damaged in such manner as not to tempt the sacrilegious thief, for their places of

164 756 *Pac. R. R. Rept.*, vol. i., pp. 405, 408. A Nez Percé doctor killed by a brother of a man who had shot himself in mourning for his dead relative; the brother in turn killed, and several other lives lost. *Ross' Fur Hunters*, vol. i., p. 239.

5: Bancroft H-4 (no date) 1883 Plateau

burial are held most sacred. Mounds of stones surmounted with crosses indicate in later times the conversion of the natives to a foreign religion.[194]

In character and in morals,[195] as well as in physique, the

[194] The Sokulks wrap the dead in skins, bury them in graves, cover with earth, and mark the grave by little pickets of wood struck over and about it. On the Columbia below the Snake was a shed-tomb sixty by twelve feet, open at the ends, standing east and west. Recently dead bodies wrapped in leather and arranged on boards at the west end. About the centre a promiscuous heap of partially decayed corpses; and at eastern end a mat with twenty-one skulls arranged in a circle. Articles of property suspended on the inside and skeletons of horses scattered outside. About the Dalles eight vaults of boards eight feet square, and six feet high, and all the walls decorated with pictures and carvings. The bodies were laid east and west. *Lewis and Clarke's Trav.*, pp. 344–5, 359–60, 379–80, 557–8. Okanagans observe silence about the death-bed, but the moment the person dies the house is abandoned, and clamorous mourning is joined in by all the camp for some hours; then dead silence while the body is wrapped in a new garment, brought out, and the lodge torn down. Then alternate mourning and silence, and the deceased is buried in a sitting posture in a round hole. Widows must mourn two years, incessantly for some months, then only morning and evening *Ross' Adven.*, pp. 321–2. Frantic mourning, cutting the flesh, etc., by Nez Percés. *Ross' Fur Hunters*, vol. i., pp. 234–5, 238–9, vol. ii., p. 139. Destruction of horses and other property by Spokanes. *Cox's Adven.*, vol. i., pp. 200–1. A shushwap widow instigates the murder of a victim as a sacrifice to her husband. The horses of a Walla Walla chief not used after his death. *Kane's Wand.*, pp. 178–9, 264–5, 277, 289. Hundreds of Wasco bodies piled in a small house on an island, just below the Dalles. A Walla Walla chief caused himself to be buried alive in the grave of his last son. *Hines' Voy.*, pp. 159, 184–8. Among the Yakimas and Kliketats the women do the mourning, living apart for a few days, and then bathing. Okanagan bodies strapped to a tree. Stone mounds over Spokane graves. *Gibbs and Stevens*, in *Pac. R. R. Rept.*, vol. i., pp. 405, 413, vol. xii., pt. i., p. 150. Pend d'Oreilles buried old and young alive when unable to take care of them. *Ind. Aff. Rept.*, 1854, pp. 211, 238. 'High conical stacks of drift-wood' over Walla Walla graves. *Townsend's Nar.*, p. 157. Shushwaps often deposit dead in trees. If in the ground, always cover grave with stones. *Mayne's B. C.*, p. 304. Killing a slave by Wascos. *White's Oyn.*, pp. 260–3. Dances and prayers for three days at Nez Percé chief's burial. *Irving's Bonneville's Adven.*, p. 283. Burying infant with parents by Flatheads. *De Smet, Voy.*, p. 173. Light wooden palings about Shushwap graves. *Milton and Cheadle's Northw. Pass.*, p. 242; *Alvord*, in *Schoolcraft's Arch.*, vol. v., p. 655; *Parker's Explor. Tour*, p. 104; *Palmer*, in *B. C. Papers*, pt. iii., p. 85; *Gass' Jour.*, p. 219; *Ind. Life*, p. 55; *Tolmie*, in *Lord's Nat.*, vol. ii., pp. 237–8, 260–1.

[195] Sokulks 'of a mild and peaceable disposition,' respectful to old age. Chilluckittequaws 'unusually hospitable and good humoured.' Chopunnish 'the most amiable we have seen. Their character is placid and gentle, rarely moved into passion.' 'They are indeed selfish and avaricious.' Will pilfer small articles. *Lewis and Clarke's Trav.*, pp. 336, 341, 351, 376, 556–8, 564. The Flatheads 'se distinguent par la civilité, l'honnêteté, et la bonté.' *De Smet, Voy.*, pp. 31–2, 38–40, 47–50, 165–74, 202–4. Flatheads 'the best Indians of the mountains and the plains,—honest, brave, and docile.' Kootenais 'men of great docility and artlessness of character.' *Stevens and Hoeckrn*, in *De Smet's West. Miss.*, pp. 281, 284, 290, 300. Coeurs d'Alène selfish and poor-spirited. *De Smet, Miss. de l'Orégon*, p. 329. In the Walla Wallas 'an air of open unsuspecting confidence,' 'natural politeness,' no obtrusive familiarity. Flatheads 'frank and hospitable.' Except cruelty to captives.